

bumped into two or three of the people who had gotten commissions while I was there instructing. I think the strength of our Army, in case of any dire emergency, is going to be the Reserves, and of course the National Guard, but the Reserves are really the foundation upon which we've got to build. I've heard that it's becoming more popular in the last few years than it was during the time of Vietnam and that might be one thing that will facilitate forming a larger Army when, as, and if it becomes necessary.

Q: In September 1940 you were appointed Executive Officer of the 16th Engineer Battalion at Fort Knox, Kentucky, and the following April '41, you became the Executive Officer of the 22d Armored Engineer Battalion at Camp Pine, New York. I'm wondering if you can tell us about your experiences during this time?

A: Well, one thing was a precursor to that. All of a sudden the clouds of war started to show up a little bit, and the 5th Corps, which was stationed, headquartered, in Columbus, Ohio, was sent on maneuvers in western Wisconsin. And I was ordered, with several other officers, not involved with the ROTC and Ohio State, to go out to LaCrosse, Wisconsin, and make arrangements to open up real estate for those maneuvers, and I spent about, oh, I guess two months doing that before I came back and found myself ordered to Fort Knox. I was anxious to get in the Armored Force because it involved a brand new concept of engineering, and I went there and the then commander of, I guess it was the 24th Engineers, was Bruce Clarke. And Bruce Clarke was, as you well know, one of our outstanding officers. He not only was an Engineer, but he became a great tactical leader during World War II. During that time all the planning that had been done by myself and others, that without a war we would eventually retire as lieutenant colonels, changed rapidly because I went from captain to major very rapidly there at Fort Knox.

I was there about a year when the 4th Armored Division was formed, and it was sent up to Camp Pine, which is now called Fort Drum, I believe, and Bruce Clarke went up there as commander of the battalion, and myself and several other officers,

including one I was very fond of by the name of Ham Morris. We finished the building of the camp in the first place, and then went into training of that Engineer outfit. During the course of that time, Bruce Clarke was made chief of staff of the 4th Armored Division, and I forget who took over as commanding officer of the battalion. We lived in Watertown, New York. Mrs. Potter and I rented a house in Watertown, and with two children, of course. Subsequently the 5th Armored Division was formed, again back at Fort Knox, so we rattled back to Fort Knox where I was assistant battalion commander--deputy battalion commander--and Reggie Dean, was battalion commander.

Q: Did you run into General Clarke later on?

A: After the Camp Pine experience, no. Oh, I've seen him since, but professionally, no, we never ran into each other again. He went his way, up through command, whereas until I went to Europe I was totally involved in training Engineer outfits. I went from Fort Knox to Camp Chaffee as commander of the 25th Armored Engineer Battalion.

Q: You were at Camp Pine until February '42 and that month, according to your official biography, you were both commander of the 25th Armored Battalion and Engineer of the 6th Armored Division at Camp Chaffee, Arkansas.

A: Yes. That division was made up of raw draftees. First place, we had to finish the camp. When we got down there the streets were all mud and the barracks weren't finished and contractors were still at work, but we formed that division. I think General [William H.] Morris was the commanding general, and by being commander of the Engineer battalion, I was automatically Engineer of the 6th Armored Division. During that time the reconnaissance battalion was commanded by Colonel James Quill, not an Engineer. He'd been a cavalryman, I think. And he and I, and our wives, have maintained close relationships ever since. The training went successfully, and I innovated a few things that seemed to be good. I became a lieutenant colonel at that time, and then we were ordered to Camp Cooke, California.

- Q: Yes. Now, I wanted to get a clarification on that. Who exactly was ordered to Camp Cooke at that time? Was it the entire battalion?
- A: No, the division. Not Camp Cooke. We were ordered to the desert. We went to the desert and did our desert training.
- Q: Which desert was this?
- A: The Mojave. We were there, oh, several months living out in the desert and had a lot of fun. The reason for it of course was that at that time the Allies were fighting [Erwin] Rommel in the African desert, but it was an established desert training center, and we lived there for six months, something like that. My wife lived in Palm Springs.
- Q: While you were undergoing this desert training did you, as an Engineer, did you experiment with innovative kinds of desert supply operations or pipeline operations, anything like that? Was there anything like that going on?
- A: Always. From time to time at midnight, I'd sound the alert for my battalion, and we'd go tearing off into the boondocks and go somewhere or other and set up a defense, peripheral defenses, and get ready for attack, go out in separate columns, testing out our radios and communications and that sort of thing. It was quite an experience and great training and innovative training because the book hadn't been written. We got a great deal of information from the African war, including booby traps and how the desert was used and how you used the desert. In an armored outfit, of course, the Engineers were always called combat Engineers, but we were heavily armed in our Engineer outfit. And it was my duty, of course, to prepare the roads and the logistics for the fighting unit, other fighting units, the infantry and the armored brigades, to do their thing. We had maneuvers almost all the time.
- Q: As I recall it was the quartermasters, though, the Quartermaster Corps, that had the responsibility for water transportation and oil?
- A: We had the job of providing the water. We had big pumps on the canals. You know, the big irrigation

canals that cross the desert going to Los Angeles. We were able to take water out of those, and we did provide the pump stations and the loading stations and maybe the Quartermaster Corps transported the water, but the Engineers' job is to provide water for the fighting forces.

Q: So then, from the desert, did you go to Camp Cooke?

A: At Camp Cooke it was the 6th Armored Division. Then they formed an armored corps, the 2d Armored Corps. And a part of the Engineer effort in an armored corps was an Engineer group, which is made up of three battalions and a bridge company, and I was placed in charge of getting raw recruits, again, and training this Engineer group. I had three battalions and the Engineer company and a headquarters company, and we moved to Camp Cooke, which, again, was a brand new camp, and we had to do all that business of getting ready for occupancy.

Q: In April 1943 you became commander of the 1138th Engineer Combat Group at Camp Cooke.

A: That's it, 1138th. Again, as for several years, my main job was training new recruits or new draftees and officers. When I formed the group I had one regular Army officer. All the rest were ROTC officers who were sent in, and they had to learn their jobs, too, with court martial authority and that sort of thing. A broad experience for them and also for me. But, in those days, and in that age group, there was an awful lot of ambition and dedication, and it was beautifully done. You've got to remember that when we started preparing for World War II there were only 25,000 Regular Army officers including medics. And those 25,000 were the core that was to take the reserve officers, and people who graduated from officer training schools, and turn them into some sort of an Army. That's why it was experience. It was teaching the whole darn time.

Q: Well, I guess your teaching days ended about November '43 when you were transferred to Headquarters, European theater, and your first duty there was as chief of the Troops Section. Can you tell us something about those days? What your